With this many people going back and forth, we’ve ever seen for cultural awareness training. What we saw this morning were speeches and presentations by highly placed people who are Native American.

McCracken stood out among the best of Indian Country’s inspirational leaders.

“Gov. Schweitzer was looking for an icon in the Native American community who could really articulate how Native people could navigate through a non-Native world,” said Anna Whiting-Sorrell, family policy adviser for the governor’s office. “What better role model than Sam?”

As the governor’s diversity training committee planned the daylong event, members asked their non-Native counterparts this question: “Who represents Indian Country to you? Who are those people?”

Sorrell said the committee expected to hear people ask for Natives such as actor Rodney Grant or poet-novelist Sherman Alexie. But people had remained enthralled with news that Nike was manufacturing shoes for Indians.

“Since he was the inspiration, we knew that was the person we needed to bring in,” she said.

The Air Native - released in September - is available only through Nike’s Native Business Program, which works through Native communities to provide shoes at below-market costs to tribal health and disease prevention programs.

But even before the N7 came to life, McCracken - who carries his great-great-grandfather’s tribal name “Pacunda” - enjoyed icon status in Native America as Nike’s Native American business development specialist for tribes.

HELENA - Sam McCracken holds a rare job in corporate America as the leader of a marketing program specifically targeting Native America.

McCracken, Native American business manager for Nike Corp., has succeeded on many business fronts. For now, he’s best known as the man who put the kick into Nike Air Native N7, a shoe specifically designed for Native athletes - and aspiring ones.

“He’s a native Montanan and someone who’s really been successful working in that corporate world and still embracing his Native culture and Native values,” said Jerry Lamb, Montana’s economic development specialist for tribes.

“He’s that role model we all need.”

McCracken, an enrolled citizen of the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation, provided the keynote address Wednesday at Gov. Brian Schweitzer’s 2007 cultural diversity training workshop in Helena.

About 250 state employees attended the training seminar, titled “How to Work Effectively with Indian Nations and Tribal Members.”

“The governor has said time and again, this state won’t raise to the levels we want unless everyone raises together,” said Hal Harper, policy director for the governor’s office. “That’s what this is about. It’s about understanding each other’s nuances, in this case cultural differences. It’s about acceptance. With this many people going back to their departments, hundreds of people, hopefully you will see a change.

“This is by far the biggest turnout we’ve ever seen for cultural awareness training. What we saw this morning were speeches and presentations by highly placed people who are Native American.”

Sherman Alexie wins the National Book Award

by: McClatchy Tribune Business News

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By Mary Ann Gwinn -- Seattle Times

SEATTLE (MCT) - Seattle author Sherman Alexie has won the National Book Award for his highly autobiographical novel for young people, “The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.”

Alexie got the news the night of Nov. 14 at the awards ceremony in New York. He won for best book in the young people’s literature category. In his acceptance speech, Alexie, an author of 19 books of fiction, poetry and essays, quipped, “Wow ... I obviously should have been writing YA [young adult] all along.”

He credited Alex Kuo, a creative-writing teacher at Washington State University who gave him an anthology of American Indian writing. It helped persuade him to become a writer. “I had never read words written by a Native American. The first one was a poem about frying baloney ... I grew up eating fried baloney. The other was a poem by Adrian Lewis, and the poem had the line, ‘Oh, Uncle Adrian, I’m in the reservation of my mind.’ I knew right then when I read that line that I wanted to be a writer. It’s been a gorgeous and magnificent and lonely 20 years since then.”

“I am in post-traumatic shock-stress syndrome,” Alexie said later. “It’s just astonishing. It’s all because 27 years ago, I went up to my mom and dad and asked if I could leave the rez school, and they said yes.”

He thanked his wife, his two sons and his editor, “who edited me, even though I can be an arrogant bastard.”

The National Book Award is one of the most prestigious awards in literature. When Alexie was named a finalist in October, he said the “very, very autobiographical” nature of the book made the attention it has received even more gratifying.

The protagonist in “Absolutely True Diary” goes on a journey very similar to the one Alexie has made - a young Indian who leaves reservation life to test himself in the outside world.

“It’s scary to put a very close version of my story out in the world - there’s a lot of emotional capital at stake,” he said at the time.

Winners in the four competitive categories - fiction, nonfiction, poetry and young people’s literature - each receive $10,000.
Greetings:

I would like to wish you a Happy New Year and welcome to the Winter Quarter 2008.

The beginning of this school year has been good with relocating to a new location of the NASP office from 224 Costa Hall to 229 Costa Hall. The new location is 4 feet square bigger than the last office and with a sink even, wonderful!

The Summer Residential Program: Gathering of the Tribes was again very successfully and the students went home feeling motivated to go to college. Many thanks to sponsoring tribes: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Aqua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, and Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The 5K Run/Walk was also very successful and Joshua Gonzales, NASP Program Assistant is to be commended for an excellent job executing the event. Thanks to Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Pauma/Yuima Band of Mission Indians, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, and California Center for Native Nations for contributing to the 5K. NASP has been very successful in sponsoring activities, which would not have been possible without the help of the tribes. The tribes’ tremendous contributions make it possible for Native students to obtain higher education and at the same time educate non-Indians about American Indian culture and history.

The Native American Student Association is gearing up for the 27th Annual Medicine Ways Conference and Pow Wow for May 23–24, 2008. They continue to fundraise to support Medicine Ways. Sponsoring activities are a good way for the students to learn how do activities and learn to work with the system to make this event possible. It’s a learning process. They are to be commended for doing a great job.

The Indian Time radio program is thriving with volunteers and the hosts are to be commended as well for continuing to disseminate information about the American Indian people while having fun playing Indian music and humoring the public.

Indian Times newspaper has been moved from hardcopy to the web to save cost. So, if you wish to read our newspapers visit our web at nasp.ucr.edu under programs and services. I understand that many Indian programs and individuals still do not have a computer, but unfortunately that is the way of changing times. I’m “old school” preferring smoke signals, but times are changing.

Have a good Quarter. Stop by our office for a visit. Students, I encourage you to participate in the Native American Student Association activities.

Sincerely,

Earl Dean Sisto, Director
Native American Student Programs

Are you an American Indian UCR Alumni?

Membership is available to any American Indian and Alaskan Native person who has graduated from the University of Riverside, California, or is a former student that has completed at least 12 quarter units before leaving the University of Riverside, California.

Associate Membership is available to any person who supports the purposes and goals of the organization.

Contact us

American Indian Alumni Association
Email: aiiaaucr@yahoo.com (AIAA General mailing)
Email: admin@ai-aa.org (AIAA Board members)
2007
Gathering of the Tribes
Summer Residential Program
With a single strike to the drum, Mountain Hawk synchronizes their singing with the drum beat under the lights.

Director of Native American Student Programs, Earl Sisto, sings with his grand-daughter, Sadie, at his side.

Luis Madrigal gives thanks to Paul for his interesting lecture.

(Left-Right) Michael Madrigal, Bill Madrigal, and Luis Madrigal show their appreciation for Paul Apodaca participating in the Lela Arenas-Madrigal Memorial Lecture.

On behalf of the Lela Arenas-Madrigal Family and the California Center for Native Nations, Paul Apodaca receives a plaque from Michael Madrigal for participating in the Lela Arenas-Madrigal Memorial Lecture.

Paul Apodaca gave a wonderful presentation on “First Voices Musical Traditions of Southern California Indians.” He spent a great portion of his life, over 30 years of research, learning about the Southern California Indians.
N.A.S.A.  
Winter  
Potluck  
2007

Jesus Cardenas, NASP Student Assistant, playing pool at the N.A.S.A. potluck while Jose Luis and Dario relax and eat.

Vanessa and Mark play with their son Max at the potluck. Their son is 8 1/2 months old. Both are prospective UCR students.

N.A.S.P. Program Assistant Josh Gonzales’s baby Oceloyaotl (4 months old) plays in his bouncer. He loves to jump around.

After opening many boxes, Jose Luis finally opens his secret Indian present.

N.A.S.A. members having fun playing slap jack. Watch you fingers! (Left-Right) Will, Gabi, Cinthya, Beyaja, Vanessa, Rachell, Jose
The original declaration contains 46 articles and allows Native peoples the right to preserve their respective political, social, economic, juridical and cultural institutions. It also assures their rights to full participation in the political, cultural, economic and social spheres of their countries, and recognizes their rights to self-determination.

Bolivia is the first country in the world to adopt the declaration as national law.

Morales noted, in his speech at the event, that only 40 years ago Quechua, Aymara and other Native people from the eastern part of the country were not allowed to enter the Government Palace, nor were they allowed to walk on the sidewalks in certain important cities.

“We have advanced, we are in the palace, and now we are in the important cities although still in some cities they do not allow us to visit the business fairs,” Morales asserted, adding that some groups still “treat us like animals.”

“That is the past for indigenous people in Bolivia and also for Latin America,” he said. “I feel we have progressed. I feel that this exploited, humiliated and offended indigenous movement has organized to move forward, and we are not only working for the indigenous movement, but for all Bolivian men and Bolivian women.”

Hundreds of Native Bolivians, including representatives of all 36 different indigenous ethnicities and Afro-Bolivian leaders, were on hand to celebrate the announcement and provide vocal support to Morales. Along with the Bolivians were other Native dignitaries such as Gloria Batzin, a Mayan Guatemalan who offered a “cordial and fraternal greeting” to the president on behalf of indigenous peoples from 16 Latin American countries including Aymara, Quechua, Nahua, Mapuche, Kuna Yala, Miskito, Arahauco, Garifuna, Yanacóna, Maya Sakapultepe (Batzin’s ethnicity) and Maya Kakchikel, among others.

“I want to ask all of you to unite our forces to promote and circulate these laws so that other countries may know the legal basis that is fundamental to our existence, and that we may know the rights that help us as indigenous peoples,” Batzin stated.

Morales also addressed the themes of rights and responsibilities.

“From the passage of this declaration,” Morales continued, “I feel that the indigenous movement has gone from one of resistance to one of power, but not sectarian, personal, individual or regional power, but to create a power that, at its core, is a way of living in a community … it is the power of resolving problems equally for all, not only in Bolivia but in the entire world.

“I feel that the United Nations is giving us a mandate, our mandate,” he asserted, “… to defend life and work for all; we have that responsibility. The indigenous movement is not vengeful, it’s not going to take vengeance on anything; we only want our rights to be respected.”

Along with the support demonstrated by various members of the audience, Morales announced that the United Nations had sent the Bolivian Congress a letter of congratulations for passing the declaration into national law and that “this declaration is without a doubt an advance for human rights.”

Rick Kears is a freelance writer, poet and teacher of Boricua heritage who focuses on indigenous issues in Latin America.

Continued from the Front Page

Nike: Air Native

McCracken is best known for his passion in serving Native people.

“He’s always had it together,” said Florence Garcia, a cousin from Fort Peck. “He’s never sought glory and fame. He always has a good spirit about him and always remembers where he comes from. I was overwhelmed with how modest he is.”

Garcia said she’s proud to see the “greatness from our ancestors” manifest within her cousin. “It’s wonderful.”

McCracken credits his “grandfather” Joe Day, as his inspiration. “He instilled in me core values,” he said. “One of those messages was, ‘Don’t forget to follow the path the Creator is going to create.’ I’ve always kept that in me: ‘You are going to work in the white man’s world. The Creator will take care of you.’”

In turn, Pacunda has taken care of others.

“He has this urge to get things done for his people,” said his aunt Joyce McGeshick. “For instance, he would ever think of Nike, one of the biggest corporations in the world, ever designing Native American shoes?”

McCracken’s main message to the group Wednesday was to embrace change.

He rose to a position within Nike the old-fashioned way. He was working for Nike in Oregon, where he helped distribute Nike products to retailers around the country. He described himself as “an everyday Joe.”

But when a relative asked him how to get Nike athletic shoes into the hands of tribal members, he took the quest to heart. He wrote a business proposal and decided to take it to corporate leaders. He figured he had nothing to lose and everything to gain in promoting health and wellness among indigenous people.

The rest is Nike history.

McCracken has since established Nike’s Native American Diabetes Program and the Native American Business Incentive Program. In 2004, he received the Bowerman Award, Nike’s most prestigious recognition, given to an employee who “remembers the man.”

“I’m overwhelmed and humbled to see what an individual can accomplish,” said Jack Burns, Nike’s U.S. e-commerce sales manager and McCracken’s boss. “He has found a way to get everyone’s help. I’m talking about people in the highest reaches of this major corporation to the delivery guy who loves getting things up to him fast because he loves Sam. It’s a gift. It’s an ability to embrace everybody there who in turn want to embrace him.

“Everybody feels part of it.”

As he sat outside the meeting room in Helena, McCracken was sporting a pair of black, size 11 Air Natives.

“There’s no finish line,” he said. “It’s not over. I can look at the shoe and say we made our splash and move on. But there’s more work to be done. The shoe, what it has done, is raise the awareness of what we need to go work on.”

Reporter Jodi Rave can be reached at 1-800-366-7186 or at jodi.rave@lee.net.

Hoeven says not to rush decision on UND nickname

Dec 13, 2007 - 05:59:17 CST
By Staff and Wire Reports

Gov. John Hoeven favors the University of North Dakota’s “Fighting Sioux” nickname, and says a decision on whether to retire the name and logo should not be rushed.
Winter Quarter 2008

"He believes it should keep it, but he
believes it should be approached in a
very thoughtful way with the tribes," Hoeven said Wednesday. "It
needs to be done respectfully. We
shouldn’t rush it."

UND recently reached a lawsuit
settlement with the NCAA over
restrictions on the use of its
nickname and American Indian
head logo, which the NCAA in
the past has called "hostile and
abusive." The school has three
years to obtain the support of
Sioux tribes or retire the nickname
and logo.

University System Chancellor
Bill Goetz has indicated he might
support retiring the nickname in
less than three years if the school
and Sioux tribes cannot agree
to continue it. Hoeven said any
decision should be made after a
substantial dialogue.

"If you’re going to have a
thoughtful, inclusive process where
you make sure that people have a
chance to have a good dialogue,
you don’t try to set a timeline on
that," Hoeven said.

Some Sioux tribal leaders in North
Dakota have maintained their
opposition to the nickname.

John Q. Paulsen, president of the
state Board of Higher Education,
said earlier this month that he
plans to talk with tribal leaders
about their opposition. He said the
talks would precede any formal
discussions by the full board about
whether to begin the process of
shredding the nickname.

North Dakota’s Board of Higher
Education, which had planned a
telephone conference call next
week, will instead meet in person
to discuss the University of North
Dakota’s Fighting Sioux
nickname, its president says.

"Given the high level of interest
in this subject, it seems to me
that it’s more appropriate to meet
to face to face," John Q. Paulsen
said Wednesday. "Any steps that
are taken need to be taken by the
Board of Higher Education, and I
just have a personal bias that face-
to-face meetings are somewhat
more effective ... than telephone
conference calls."

The meeting will be held Dec. 20
at Bismarck State College, said
William Goetz, the chancellor of the
state university system. Its
location and time, and the subjects
on the meeting’s agenda, were still
being determined Wednesday.

Paulsen said he did not expect
the board to make a decision on
whether to keep or discard the
nickname.

Goetz said he had notified Ron His
Horse Is Thunder, chairman of the
Standing Rock Sioux tribe, of the
meeting, and was trying to reach
Myra Pearson, chairwoman of the
Spirit Lake Sioux. Goetz said he
did not know if they would attend.

Canton said the governor would be
willing to be a part of negotiations
with tribal leaders over the
nickname, though Hoeven thinks
UND should take the lead. Hoeven
said members of North Dakota’s
congressional delegation also have
told him they’re willing to be part of
discussions.

“What’s more important than the
timeline is that you have a
thoughtful dialogue, you work to
be inclusive and be open to
ideas and you be respectful, and
you work through a good process," 
Hoeven said.

Federal appeals court hears
bald eagle case

Winslow Friday, a Northern Arapaho
tribal member who admitted killing
a bald eagle in 2005 for use in a
religious ceremony, makes his way
into the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals
at the Federal Courthouse in Denver
on Monday. Photo by Bill Ross.

Posted: December 28, 2007
by: Carol Berry

DENVER – Balancing the
government’s method of
safeguarding eagle populations
with the rights of American Indians
to use eagles for religious purposes
occupied a federal court in Denver
Dec. 17.

The issue was brought before a
three-judge panel in the 10th U.S.
Circuit Court of Appeals as federal
prosecutors sought to overturn the
acquittal of Winslow Friday, a 23-
year-old Northern Arapaho man
from the Wind River Reservation
in Wyoming who acknowledged
shooting a bald eagle in 2005 for
use in a Sun Dance.

Friday was acquitted of violation
of the federal Bald and Golden
Eagle Protection Act in federal
court in Wyoming, but the U.S.
Department of Justice sought to
reinstate the charges against him.
A conviction against an individual
can carry a maximum penalty of
$100,000 fine and one year in
prison.

The appellate court heard
arguments as to why the charges
should not be reinstated and also
heard clarification on issues raised
in the lower courts. The court
could reinstate the charges, deny
reinstatement, uphold a lower
court finding that the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service’s administration
of eagle permitting is flawed, rule
on the existence of the FWS permit
system itself, or rule otherwise.

A ruling is not expected in the
immediate future.

At odds are the FWS’ methods of
protecting eagle populations and
the rights of Native people to
freely use eagles and eagle parts in
religious ceremonies such as the
Sun Dance under protections of the
Religious Freedom Restoration Act
and the U.S. Constitution.

In Denver, Friday said he did not
apply for an eagle permit from the
FWS because the Northern
Arapaho Sun Dance required an
eagle from the wild, and he did not
know a so-called “take permit”
was available that would have
made it lawful for him to take the
eagle as he did.

The FWS permits commonly
known in the Indian community
are not take permits, but permits
to possess eagle carcasses or
feathers from the National Eagle
Repository. Application for these
permits involves a waiting period
of from two to nearly five years
for immature birds, depending on
whether they are bald or golden
eagles.

Even if Friday had applied for a
take permit, apparently it would
two have been granted, according to
a FWS spokesman who said Dec. 17
that take permits are granted at
the national level and not available
to individuals.

That position is disputed by
Friday’s defense attorney, who
points to statutes that he says allow
individuals’ taking of eagles. The
attorney, assistant federal public
defender John T. Carlson, said he
believes the government misleads
people by telling them they cannot
apply for take permits and by
not informing FWS employees
themselves of the law.

The appellate court heard
arguments that the trust
responsibility of the government
toward tribal nations involves
accommodating indigenous
religious practices in a manner
that would not preclude preserving
viable eagle populations.

The government had the burden
to show that the FWS permit system
was the least restrictive way of
meeting the competing interests,
Carlson said.

Because of increased numbers, the
bald eagle has been removed from
protection under the Endangered
Species Act, although it remains
listed under other federal laws. Its
removal from ESA status, taken
together with the mass occurrence
of eagles electrocuted yearly on
non-raptorproof power lines,
indicates that American Indians
should not have to go through the
cumbersome or little-known
provisions of the FWS permit
process, he said.

Kathryn Kovacs, an assistant
U.S. attorney, said the system of
permits is “burdensome” and
inconvenient, making the religious
use of eagles more difficult, but not
“impossible.”

Continued on pg. 8
Bald Eagle Case

During the hearing in the appellate court, a Northern Arapaho tribal attorney said Friday would not have been convicted under traditional tribal law which, unlike Eurocentric law, may be unwritten and which predates the existence of the United States.

A change in permitting from a possible ruling by the court would not result in a "flood" of applications for take permits, he said, because although the FWS seems to hold out a "pan-Indian religion," in fact there are more than 300 tribal nations, most of whose religious practices differ, and the Arapaho are one of few tribes to take eagles from the wild.

The government's position is that doing away with the permitting system could threaten the viability of the eagle species, and the courts have held that some regulation is necessary, Kovacs said.

The Northern Arapaho and Shoshone tribal nations inhabit the same reservation area and tribal code prohibits all takes, she said, noting that Friday took one of only two eagles nesting at the time on the reservation.

If the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals reinstates the charges against Friday, the matter could be appealed.

Eagle carcasses are generally obtained by the repository from state and federal wildlife employees after the birds have been electrocuted on power lines or have been killed by poisoning, vehicle collisions, unlawful shooting and trapping, disease or other causes.

According to the FWS, at present only enrolled members of federally recognized tribes can obtain permits authorizing them to receive and possess eagle feathers from the repository for religious purposes.

Sherman Alexie wins National Book Award.


Alexie, Spokane/Coeur d'Alene, is the fifth Washington state resident to win the award. "Absolutely True Diary," published by Little, Brown, was illustrated by Seattle artist Ellen Forney.

Alexie, 41, has been critically acclaimed for his work - a mix of insight and honesty, compassion and outrageous humor. He also has had a successful career as a filmmaker, playwright and teacher, and other books and films have drawn on his Indian heritage. But "Absolutely True Diary" may be the book that's closest to the life he led.

Like Alexie, 14-year-old Arnold Spirit survives being born with hydrocephalus (water on the brain), becomes an honors student and ultimately leaves the Spokane Indian reservation for a white school. He battles the alcoholism of his parents, the death of family members, poverty and despair.

In a September interview, Alexie called himself a "reluctant role model...I write aware of that. Especially with this book, certainly, whose theme is about escape, I hope it encourages all sorts of trapped people to feel like they can escape." Other winners included "Time and Materials," by Robert Hass (poetry); "Legacy of Ashes: A History of the CIA," by Tim Weiner (nonfiction); and "Tree of Smoke," by Denis Johnson (fiction).

Freelancer John Freeman contributed to this report.

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